

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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TAGS: PGOV PINT BG
SUBJECT: OSMANI GIVES PRESS CONFERENCE; UKIL LISTS CONDITIONS
FOR THE GOJ FRONT PARTICIPATION; ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN
GIVES SIMILAR CONDITIONS FOR HIS PARTICIPATION

REF: DACCA 2763

1. RETIRED GENERAL M.A.G. OSMANI, NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT
BY GANOTANTRIK OIKKO JOTE (GOJ--DEMOCRATIC UNITED FRONT),
OUTLINED HIS BASIC POLITICAL GOALS AT A PRESS CONFERENCE
TUESDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 2. HE SAID THAT IF HE WERE
ELECTED PRESIDENT, HE WOULD RESTORE PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY
BY HANDING OVER POWER TO A PARLIAMENT WHICH IN TURN
COULD LATER ELECT A PRESIDENT WHO WOULD BE A TITULAR
HEAD OF STATE. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE BANGLADESH
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PEOPLE HAD REJECTED A PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT, WHICH
UNDER THE PROGRAMS PUT FORWARD BY THE PRESENT REGIME
WOULD MAKE PARLIAMENT MERELY A "DEBATING SOCIETY".
DRAWING ON HIS CREDENTIALS AS A LIBERATION WAR HERO, HE
COMMENTED, "THE WAR OF LIBERATION WAS NOT FOUGHT FOR SUCH
A SYSTEM."

2. OSMANI ANSWERED SEVERAL QUESTIONS FROM REPORTERS CONCERNING HIS BACKING FROM THE AWAMI LEAGUE (AL). HE ASSURED HIS LISTENERS THAT IT WAS THE AWAMI LEAGUE, AND NOT BAKSAL, WHICH HAD JOINED THE FRONT AND THAT THERE OUGHT TO BE NO QUESTION OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE'S SUPPORT FOR A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. HE INDICATED THAT SHEIKH MUJIB WOULD BE CALLED THE FATHER OF THE NATION IN THE FORTHCOMING FRONT MANIFESTO. OSMANI ALSO CALLED FOR AN INQUIRY NOT ONLY INTO THE SHEIKH'S ASSASSINATION, BUT THE DACCA CENTRAL JAIL KILLING OF THE FOUR AL MINISTERS IN NOVEMBER, 1975.

3. AT ANOTHER PRESS CONFERENCE, ABDUL MALIK UKIL, PRESIDENT OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE, SET FORTH SEVEN CONDITIONS WHICH MUST BE MET BY MAY 7 OR "THE FRONT SHALL BE CONSTRAINED TO CONSIDER WITHDRAWAL OF THE CANDIDATE AND TO REFRAIN FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS". THE SEVEN POINTS, IN CONDENSED FORM, WERE:

I) RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT ZIA AS CHIEF OF STAFF
(IN REALITY, RESIGNATION OF HIS MILITARY COMMISSION).
II) RESIGNATION OF ZIA AS CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR;
III) WITHDRAWAL OF MARTIAL LAW;
IV) EXTENSION OF THE ELECTION DATE BY AT LEAST 90 DAYS;
V) REPEAL OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES REGULATION
(PPR); REMOVAL OF THE BAN ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND REMOVAL
OF ALL CONSTRAINTS ON OPEN POLITICS; GUARANTEE OF EQUAL
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ACCESS TO MEDIA AND TRANSPORTATION BY ALL CANDIDATES;
VI) FREEDOM OF PRESS;
VII) RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS.

UKIL EMPHASIZED THAT IF ZIA DID NOT RESIGN HIS MILITARY COMMISSION, THE ELECTION WOULD BECOME "A CONTEST BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE ARMED FORCES, WHICH IS CONTRARY TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST."

4. ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN, MEANWHILE, ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT GIVING HIS PRECONDITIONS SUBSTANTIALLY IDENTICAL TO UKIL'S, FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS. ATA ALSO CHARACTERIZED THE SNAP ELECTION UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AS "A GIGANTIC HOAX" AND "NOTHING SHORT OF AN ELABORATE FRAUD." HE ALSO SAID THAT FOR ZIA TO CONTEST AS CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF WAS "ABSURD AND FARCICAL," AND CLAIMED THAT ZIA HAD ASSURED HIM THAT HE WOULD QUIT THE ARMY FOR POLITICS. ATA FINISHED HIS STATEMENT BY SAYING HE HAD DECIDED THAT FILING NOMINATION PAPERS WOULD BE USELESS UNLESS HIS PRECONDITIONS WERE MET, BUT HE WOULD RECONSIDER HIS PARTICIPATION IF HIS VARIOUS DEMANDS WERE REALIZED.

5. COMMENT: ATATUR RAHMAN EARLIER HAD HAD HIS NAME
REJECTED, PRIMARILY BY THE AWAMI LEAGUE, DURING THE THREE
DAYS OF PARTY MEETINGS LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF THE
GOJ FRONT AND OSMANI INSTEAD BECAME THE CANDIDATE.
AFTER HIS REJECTION, ATA DECIDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE AND
ISSUED HIS ABOVE STATEMENT.
SCHNEIDER

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